

VZCZCXRO4535  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHMOS RUEHPW  
DE RUEHJI #0357/01 1351121  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 151121Z MAY 06  
FM AMCONSUL JEDDAH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9150  
INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1373  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1451  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 6487  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000357

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN; DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP;  
PARIS FOR ZEYA; LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2016

TAGS: [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#) [SCUL](#)

SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA - MAY 5:  
MORALITY AND PALESTINE DOMINATE SERMONS.

Classified By: Consul General Tatiana Gfoeller, for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

FROM EASTERN PROVINCE CALL FOR MORAL CONDUCT AND SUPPORT FOR  
PALESTINIANS

¶1. (C) On May 5, after a week's absence due to the death of his father, Imam Mohammad al-Qahtani returned to Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal Mosque in al-Khobar with a fiery sermon against immorality and in support of Palestinians. His sermon began with a condemnation of the decadence evident in the Muslim community. He blamed the moral decline on the prevalence of satellite TV, the internet and other modern means of entertainment and communications which undermined acceptable moral standards "as a cancer would a human organ." He saw this baleful influence throughout the world, not just in the Muslim community. He claimed not to be opposed to all modern entertainment, but excoriated the number of satellite channels and internet sites catering to sexual desire. He described his own personal "experiment" in which he visited an acquaintance's home and surfed through the TV channels. He claimed to have explored nearly 1000 channels and considered over 700 of them "sexy." He railed that so much temptation was bound to corrupt the population's social conduct. The source attending this sermon felt that the imam's words implied that part of the blame "should be put squarely on the doorstep of the Saudi government."

IMAM WITNESSES HOMOSEXUAL ACT, BUT IS UNABLE TO SUMMON  
RELIGIOUS POLICE

¶2. (C) The imam continued his tirade against immorality by relating an incident he had witnessed while visiting a popular beach with some friends. He did not identify the location or even the country of the beach, but the source indicated that most of the congregation understood him to mean Half Moon Bay beach in al-Khobar. The imam related that: "Some friends and I had spent the night at the beach where we ate a meal, played sports games (sic) and, following the dawn prayers in the morning, we heard some loud music coming from the direction of a nearby camp. Curiosity got the better of us, so we went there to investigate and to tell the people inside to lower the music. I went in and found the door unlocked. What I saw was beyond belief. I saw two men acting as a man and his wife would in their bedroom. One of the men demanded to know what I wanted and when I couldn't respond, he ordered me out. When I asked someone to call the Mutawas (the religious police), I was told that this was not

possible because the place was inaccessible and off limits to the Mutawas." NOTE: The imam did not reveal to the congregation if he was ultimately successful in having the wayward pair arrested and executed for their "unnatural" act. END NOTE.

13. (C) COMMENT: This incident sheds an interesting light on several aspects of Saudi society. The admission by a religious figure that he had actually observed a homosexual act is powerful evidence that homosexuality occurs commonly in this country, even though it can bring a death sentence. It also shows that many Saudis seek out refuges from the strict moral behavior that is enforced on them, and that the operators of these refuges abet them by barring the Mutawa. It also should be noted that an imam, in furtherance of his mission to suppress vice, felt no compunction in entering the private residence of another person without permission, when his "curiosity" was aroused by signs of immorality, e.g. music. END COMMENT.

AS THE PROPHET MOHAMMED PREVAILED, SO WILL THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE

14. (C) In his next sermon, al-Qahtani held up the example of the Prophet's struggle with the tribesmen of Quraish as an example for modern Arabs concerned about Palestine. In this incident, the Prophet and his followers were besieged by the Quraish for three years and reduced to terrible straits to survive. Even the Hashemites, who had not yet converted to Islam, but were seen as sympathetic, were attacked by the ungodly Quraish. But the Muslim community persevered, and the Prophet vanquished his enemies. The imam compared this event to the lot of the Palestinians now. The West, he complained, has denied the Palestinian people food, medicine,

JEDDAH 00000357 002 OF 002

clothing and everything necessary to life. The imam said: "Like millions of other Muslims and Arabs, I want to send some money to help my Palestinian brethren, but how? All roads have been blocked. Egypt will not help; neither will Syria nor any other Arab country. The West will not help, and it will not let others help. But as the Prophet Mohammed came out victorious, so will the people of Palestine." COMMENT: The apparent inability of an influential cleric of al-Qahtani's status to send money to the Palestinians suggests that Arab governments have had some success in controlling the transfer of funds by Islamic charitable organizations. END COMMENT.

FROM MECCA: NOBLE GOALS CANNOT BE ATTAINED THROUGH CROOKED WAYS - INCLUDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

15. (U) In his May 5 sermon from the holy mosque in Mecca, Shaykh Usamah Abdallah Khayyat advanced the tenet that evil means cannot be used to achieve good and legitimate goals. He continued, asserting that "any action conflicting with the teachings of Islam is wrong," then specified that "any relationship between man and woman conflicting with the Islamic law is unacceptable. (W)omen should not be allowed to attain their legitimate rights through sin and mixing with men."

ALSO, A VERY MODEST PLEA FOR TOLERANCE OF ATHEISTS

16. (U) In his second sermon, the imam celebrated the Muslim religion as noble and honorable, but cautioned that Muslims should not "abus(e) the gods of atheists in order not to give atheists a justification for abusing our God." NOTE: If the translation is exact, it demonstrates that the imam considers non-Muslims not simply non-believers, but atheists. END NOTE.

FROM MEDINA: ISLAMIC VALUES PRESERVE THE NATION; MANY ARE KILLED IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

17. (U) That same day, speaking in Medina, Shaykh Abd-al-Bari al-Thubayti said that Islamic values protect

society. "Nations and materialistic civilizations," he claimed, "collapse because of their weak, self-interested, and even bankrupt ideals and values." Then he asked: "How many people are killed or wounded and how much property is destroyed in the name of freedom and interests?"  
Gfoeller